

Posterior Analytics

A certain phenomenon propounded to me the other day a kind of new Darwinianism. These are in us, he said, two parts - one which acts and feels, and a second whose function it is to look on at the doing, at first. Now a cow has feelings without reflection, and the lower order of man feels very much more than he reflects. But as you rise in the scale the element of reflection grows and grows; in fact a morbid and abnormal development of this part of the soul is fast becoming a necessity ^{for those who would men} in the best circles. These facts of experience would lead us to form a theory of evolution; for the principle of evolution is to observe what has happened in the past and carry this to its logical conclusion - that is ^{to say} to see that it will happen more and more forever and ever.

His theory of evolution, therefore, was this: we start originally without reflection; when we have reached the stage of Man, the enemy creeps in. As man himself evolves reflection grows until finally it has altogether expelled feeling, and man reflects upon his feelings, until by hypothesis the feelings no longer exist and he can only reflect upon his reflections. But ^{then} he is like endless mirrors in an empty room; there is nothing; he has ceased to exist; a new evolution must begin.

The tendency towards self-consciousness and self-analysis, which the cow is so fortunately without, is therefore an antivital instinct. It leads or at any rate it tends towards extinction; it does not promote life. But if it is antivital, it must be morbid; it is the disease of our

modern civilisation and will prove its destruction.

I suppose this was his way of telling me that he thought it bad endlessly to fuss about one's feelings and that this was a sure way to put an end to the feelings. And I suppose it was also his method of convincing me of this important truth.

I tried to reassure him so far as the future and evolution were concerned. But it cannot have been merely ~~of~~ ^{from} distress lest his remote descendants should carry it dangerously far that he was disturbed about the state of mind of the present generation.

In fact it is an old view and always common that analysis destroys simplicity and simplicity truths. ~~And~~ And it seems little more than a device to make it out anti-vital, to add that it also destroys content.

It is certainly true that there are some aesthetic qualities which the Infidel Analyst forswears. I think he resigns what is loved by others - the quality of simple goodness. He cannot so easily act, when he acts rightly, with quite so calm and unconcernedly ^{and}. Whatever his motive, and it will probably be complex, he will not be able to overlook all the other bad motives by which he might conceivably be actuated and which would lead to the same external action. He is liable to see the possibly egoistic trend of altruistic action, and it is not surprising that the consciousness may sometimes make him look an egoist.

In people of simple goodness, it is plain and palpable

not only that they have not acted from the doubtful motive but that not even the notion of it has ever entered their heads.

This gives us a kind of double security - we know that they really are good and we know that they are not nearly clever enough to attribute to us elaborate and complicated wickednesses which we do not really intend but ~~of~~ with which we see a really far gone analyst might detect our external conduct ~~not~~ to be ^{not} altogether incompatible.

And besides this it has an aesthetic charm. This is the most important ~~part~~ ^{part} ~~of it~~; it is one of the things we love; but there does not seem very much to say about it.

Yet I suspect that from the point of view of the possessor it is one of those excellences which like a good complexion bring him only indirect advantages.

It is, in fact, the good complexion of the soul.

I fancy we would scarcely change with it; we should all like good complexions - superimposed. But that is the difficulty - they do not come that way, they imply all kinds of things which, if we changed, we must be willing to accept as well.

In fact we would rather be ourselves than the superbest marble of Michael Angelo.

I would not sell self-consciousness for all the simplicity in heaven.

No doubt, my self-consciousness is not worth much to you; you would rather I had a good complexion.

We would all best away the feverish and restless minds of all

the rest for beauty, simplicity, and charm - if we could keep our own.
In fact if we could not keep our own, our alchemy would have
overreached itself; for simplicity is surely wasted on the simple.
But there is something else of more doubtful value that is sometimes
meant by self-analysis or that is thought to accompany it.

So far I have intended the power of vision, an appreciation of
details both in ourselves and in others, the valuation and knowledge
of motives, the understanding of evil as well as of good, and
a certain curiosity.

For whether or not your analyst achieves them, these are some
^{the} offerings at which he aims and towards which with less or greater skill
he moves.

When the so-called analyst abuses his vocation and ones out on his habits,
it is an attendant disease which he is really attacking.

He means a kind of indecision in matters that affect himself;
he is constantly attempting to evaluate and compare himself or
parts and faults of himself and for ever unable to make an
end of the matter.

He is not prepared to take himself for granted in the way that
he takes other people. He is nervously anxious ~~to~~ to get
out the answer that he wants and even more nervously
anxious not to cheat. If the sum comes out wrong, he
begins it again and if it comes out right he suspects that
it is only by virtue of a fancy frame and thinks he ~~ought~~ ^{ought} to
verify ~~it~~ it by another method.

This certainly sounds like a disease, but I am not sure that ~~the~~ it is peculiar to the analyst.

At any rate this is not analysis; at least it is very bad analysis. Nor is it altogether fair to bring it into court when we are judging the aims and projects of the analyst.

For whatever calamities he may involve himself in practice, surely he is on the right track. At least so it seems to me.

We do not want to be statues on the one hand or cats on the other.

We want to have some sense; and how we are to get ^{it} without analysis I do not understand.

I do not want to be good, if it precludes me from knowing what's what and, incidentally, what is good.

But really, on reflection, I see no reason why all the good virtues should not be combined.

It is not our posterior analytics that stands in the way, but natural deficiency.

Smirking would not cease to be smirking, if it were to analyse and reflect upon itself.

Nor does analysis kill feeling; it stimulates it.

In short I protest against putting down all our troubles and all our follies to the door of the Method.

It seems to me the one thing which keeps a little amusement in life. I don't believe your snipletton ever really giggles from now to ever.

But to return to the phenomenon with which I began. I was charmed at first with his notion of an ever increasing reflection of an ever diminishing image as the bourn of evolution. Narcissus for ever endeavouring to view his own image more minutely, until at last he ~~falls~~^{tumbles} in. It seemed the proper conclusion for the descendant of the primeval ape who scratched himself away in an ecstasy of itching, and of the more primeval worm who, in an excessive desire to make wormcasts quickly, became one. But I now see that the phenomenon, as phenomena do, had got hold of the wrong story.

So far from abolishing it the analyst infinitely increases his content; by dividing his matter, he multiplies it. He opens up new vistas and peeps through new crannies at them. If we are going to play at evolution at all, the danger plainly lies the other way. Instead of diminishing, he will swell. He will analyse the Universe into its component parts and usurp the functions of the Deity. He will search the hearts of men and judge righteously without wrath. Evolution will have accomplished what Signor Papini is attempting at present and have made men like Gods.

But I have not much more faith in evolution than I have in Signor Papini, and analysis will have justified itself in my eyes if it sometimes leads ~~us~~^{us} right and ~~preserves~~^{at others} a little amusement for those desperadoes who heroically refrain from exercise even ~~in the advanced phase of~~ ~~the~~ in the astonishing atmosphere of Cambridge.